

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD**

In the Matter of the LEPGP Site &
HVTL Route Permit Application by
Xcel Energy associated with the
expansion of the Blue Lake Power
Generating Plant in Scott County

**FINDINGS OF FACT,
CONCLUSIONS, AND ORDER**

**MEQB DOCKET NO.
04-75-PPS-Xcel Blue Lake**

The above-captioned matter came before the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board at a special meeting on June 17, 2004, pursuant to an application by Northern States Power Company d/b/a Xcel Energy for a Large Electric Power Generating Plant Site Permit and a High Voltage Transmission Line Route Permit associated with the proposed expansion of the Blue Lake Generating Plant. Xcel proposes to add two, 162-megawatt, simple cycle, natural gas-fired combustion turbine generators at the Blue Lake Generating Plant and to construct a new segment of double circuit 115/230 kV transmission line, approximately 4000 feet in length, to connect the Blue Lake Substation to an existing 230 kV transmission line that passes south of the Plant.

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

Should Xcel Energy be granted a Site Permit and a Route Permit for the turbines and transmission lines associated with the proposed Blue Lake Plant expansion project? If so, along what route should the HVTL be constructed and what conditions should be incorporated into the permits?

Based upon all of the proceedings herein, the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board makes the following:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Summary of Evidence of the Administrative Law Judge in his Report of June 11, 2004, is hereby adopted as Findings of Fact by the EQB, with the following corrections:

Page 2, line 1 replace "substation" with "Plant"

Page 10, item No. 33, line 6 replace "Dakota" with "Scott"

Page 15, item No. 56, line 7 replace "1,300" with "1,400"

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Environmental Quality Board makes the following

CONCLUSIONS

1. Any of the foregoing Findings more properly designated as Conclusions are hereby adopted as such.
2. The Environmental Quality Board has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this proceeding pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 116C.57, subdivision 2.
3. This project qualifies for review under the Alternative Review Process of Minn. Stat. § 116C.575 and Minn. Rules parts 4400.2000 to 4400.2950.
4. The Applicant and the EQB have complied with all procedural requirements required by law.
5. The EQB has completed an Environmental Assessment on this project as required by Minn. Stat. § 116C.575, subdivision 5, and Minn. Rules part 4400.2750, and considered all the pertinent factors in determining which route and site to approve.
6. The conditions included in the Site and Route Permits are reasonable and appropriate and will help to minimize the impacts of this project and are agreed to by the Applicant.

Based on the Findings of Fact and Conclusions contained herein and the entire record of this proceeding, the Environmental Quality Board hereby makes the following

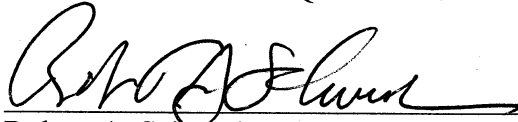
ORDER

A Site Permit is issued to Northern States Power Company d/b/a Xcel Energy for construction of a 324 megawatt, natural gas fired large electric power generating plant in Scott County within the boundaries of the existing Blue lake Generating Plant. The Permit shall be issued in the form attached hereto, with a map showing the approved site.

A Route Permit is issued to Northern States Power Company d/b/a Xcel Energy for construction of a double circuit, 115/230 kilovolt transmission line in Scott County along the route proposed by the Applicant and under the conditions specified in the permit. The Permit shall be issued in the form attached hereto, with a map showing the approved route.

Approved and adopted this 17th day of June, 2004

STATE OF MINNESOTA
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert A. Schroeder', written over a horizontal line.

Robert A. Schroeder,
Chair

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